

What is taking them so long?

A critical discourse analysis examining the hold-up in
implementing policy initiatives to reduce meat consumption
in Sweden

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“Trots att animaliekonsumtionen har stor påverkan på klimatet, miljön, djur och folkhälsa är det sällan frågan debatteras politiskt och det finns inga politiska beslut med syfte att minska konsumtionen i en mer hållbar riktning”

- Jens Holm

Abstract

In later years, discourse on meat consumption has gained increased focus within the political sphere. In Sweden, despite the increase in attention, it is yet to result in any implementation of significant initiatives targeted at reducing meat consumption. In this paper, we have used critical discourse analysis to analyse the discourse on meat consumption in Sweden, searching for aspects and issues that might hinder implementing political initiatives regarding reducing meat consumption. We have searched through 23 different sources, including debates, transcription and literature, to motivate the political actions and attitudes as well as society's perception and social influence. Using newspapers and media outlets to show the opinion of the public. The source was analysed through Bacchi's *What's the Problem Represented to be?* An approach where the sources were analysed through her six questions. The analysis resulted in key findings divided into four topics. These topics were *Responsibility, Intervening and Control, Information and Misinformation* and *Social and Behavioural aspects*, which all gave insight into answering the research question of what aspects and issues might hinder political initiatives targeted at reducing meat consumption within Sweden.

Keywords: Reducing meat consumption, Climate effects, Policy initiatives, Swedish discourse, WPR methodology

Words: 9998

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1.0 Introduction

Climate change is one if not the most significant issue facing humanity today. Developing countries have often had to deal with the lasting effects of climate change, even though the issues have been rooted in Western societies. The idea is to stop letting developing countries bear the burden of climate-related issues. It is the guiding principle of our focus, overconsumption in Sweden. Focusing on meat consumption in Sweden relates to UN goal 12 of letting developed countries take the lead and solving one of the biggest climate emitters, also following the goal 13 idea of adopting and implementing new policy instruments that support the shift towards reducing climate change. This bachelor's thesis tries to understand the problem of implementing policies for reducing meat.

The paper engages in the empirical puzzle by investigating the lack of new political initiatives targeting the reduction of Swedish meat consumption, looking at how it is presented generally in society and politics. Reducing meat consumption, shortened to RMC, means we want to reduce the overall meat consumption, specifically beef, as they are the most significant contributor to methane emissions. We do not argue that people should go vegan/vegetarian but should instead focus on the amount of meat consumed.

The theoretical framework follows Fairclough, Patterson's and Gustafssons's theories: the power of language, the fear of backlash in climate policy and politicians applying inefficient policies. To help answer the research question, Carol Bacchi's critical discourse analysis method will be applied. This paper argues that perception, social attitudes, and formulation of the meat issue play a tremendous role in the discourse of meat consumption within Sweden. Where this paper can help point to specific aspects of the discourse that hinder political initiatives targeting meat consumption reduction. The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows: Section 3 presents a literature review and a background on meat consumption in Sweden. Section 4 explores the theoretical framework related to the discourse of RMC in Sweden. Section 5 looks at the methodology, including research design, research method, data collection, reflexivity about our positionality and data analysis. Section 6 is the analysis, looking at *Responsibility, Intervening and Control, Information and Misinformation* and the *Social and Behavioural aspect*. The final Section 7 provides the conclusion for this paper.

This paper is therefore guided by the research question: *What specific aspects and issues within the discourse of reducing meat consumption might hinder political initiatives within Sweden?*

2.0 Specific Aims

2.1 Research Question

The research investigates the lack of new political initiatives targeted at RMC in Sweden. Through the lens of critical discourse analysis, it explores narratives pursued in discussing meat consumption reduction. It aims to produce knowledge to help understand why political initiatives have stalled in RMC. Sweden is often perceived to be at the forefront of innovating change to reduce climate change, and this paper challenges that view. Instead, we argue that meat consumption, one of the biggest emitters, has been underrepresented in the Swedish climate change discourse and political initiatives. It examines attitudes, social norms, and societal perceptions and how these are reflected in formulating the issue. Through Fairclough (1995), we also look at the issues of language, power, and society. The aim is to have generated an answer to what specific aspects and issues within the discourse of meat consumption might hinder political initiatives within Sweden relating to the research question.

3.0 Background and Significance

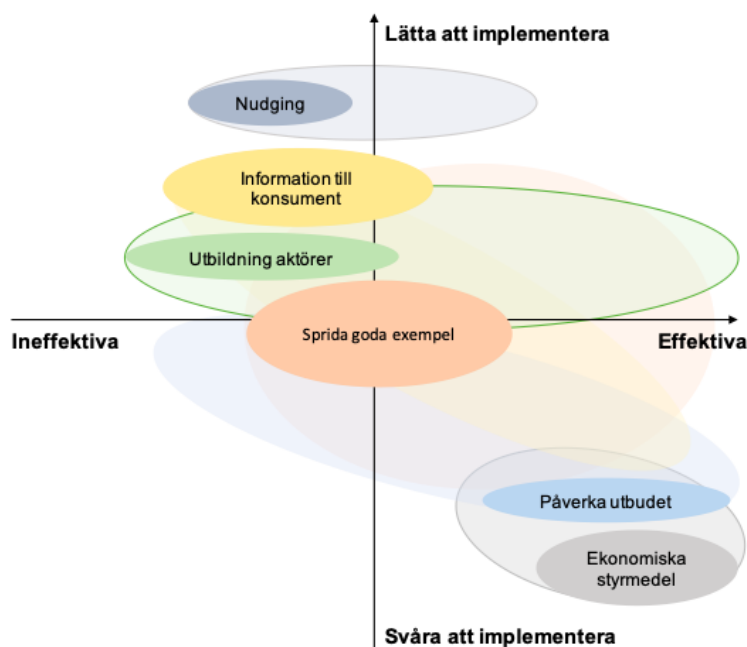
3.1 Literature Review

Several studies have revealed that RMC is vital to lowering greenhouse gas emissions (Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013). According to Dagevos and Voordouw, reducing meat becomes essential since it is one of the most energy- and environmentally-intensive foods. As a result, eating habits and sustainability are inextricably intertwined. (Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013)

Although there is a need for governmental actions to reduce meat consumption, few such policies have been initiated and implemented (Michielsen, van der Horst, 2022). Policymakers could benefit from softer approaches like nudging and choice editing, as it holds the potential to influence the reduction of meat consumption (Mont et al., 2022., Lehner et al., 2016) Today policy-making for sustainable consumption is at an impasse where policies often are one or the other but never both influential and implementable. The easy-to-implement policies used today without much controversy have also frequently had a little overall impact (Mont et al., 2022). Figure 1.0 (Konsumentverket, 2022) estimates the efficiency of policy approaches for RMC and argues that easily implemented policies often also have high efficiency. There is the idea within the academic that policymakers are concerned that meaningful consumption policies are too controversial to propose (Koenig, 2003). The literature review inspired us to write this paper and laid the ground for our research question. The aspects presented in the academia

and the discussions they had gave us a preliminary idea of the field, it helped highlight specific areas that might be present, and that might hinder the policy initiatives in Sweden.

Figure 1.0 Implementation of methods.



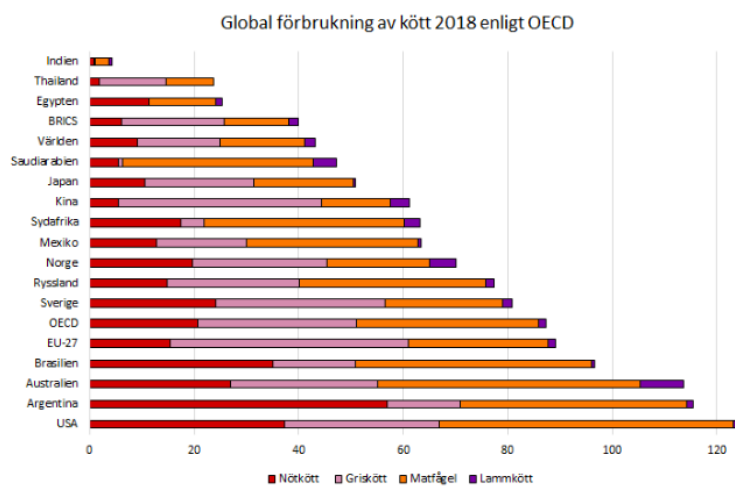
3.2 Meat Consumption in Sweden

This part provides background on meat consumption in Sweden and will give an insight into the current situation regarding RMC, which should be kept in mind when going through the analysis. The issue of meat consumption has become a debated topic worldwide, with its inclusion in the SDGs Goal 12 developed by the United Nations (United Nations, 2022a) and its connections to Goal 13 (United Nations, 2022b). Different political parties and politicians do not see eye to eye (SMMI, 2022). Most parties, primarily the right oriented parties do not include a lot, if any policies or initiatives regarding RMC. Parties such as Socialdemokraterna, Centerpartiet and Liberalerna have also shown lack of policy initiatives on RMC. Left oriented parties, such as Vänsterpartiet and Miljöpartiet are instead framing their politics to include more policies surrounding this topic. Vänsterpartiet and Miljöpartiet are the only parties that promote policies for food and climate. (SMMI, 2022)

In Sweden, meat consumption has steadily increased in the 20th and 21st centuries. For instance, beef consumption has increased since 1960 by 29 percent. There has been around a 300 percent increase in the consumption of poultry meat. (Naturvårdsverket, 2018). Swedish meat consumption has an overall emission of 9 million tons, much higher than the global average of 1.1 tons of annual carbon dioxide. (Sveriges Riksdag, 2022c., Wilde, 2022) Generally, Sweden is one of the countries with the most

significant ecological footprint. If every human were to live as a typical Swede does, it would require 4,2 globes (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2021b). According to leading climate scientists, meat consumption needs to decrease sharply if the world is to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees (SVT Nyheter, 2019). The worst of the different types of meat is cattle, the number one agricultural source of greenhouse gases worldwide. A single cow will belch around 220 pounds of methane each year. Methane is shorter-lived than carbon dioxide but 28 times more potent in warming the atmosphere. Livestock is responsible for about 15,5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (Quinton, 2019), and cattle beef for about 30 percent of Sweden’s total meat consumption. (Naturvårdsverket, 2018)

Figure 2.0 shows the division of different types of meat in Sweden compared with a handful of other



4.0 Theoretical Framework

4.1 Fairclough’s Theory on Language, Power, and Society

Fairclough’s theory concerns the relationship between language, power, and society. The theory is based upon Michael Foucault’s discourse theory which suggests that power is everywhere and maintained and understood through so-called accepted knowledge. The central idea of Fairclough’s theory is that discourse is an essential form of social practice, reproducing and changing knowledge, identities, and social relations, including power. External social practices and structures also shape it. Fairclough sees social structures as social relations in society and as a whole. It sheds light on the different social structures and power relations that shape social practices and relations, something people might be unaware of in these processes. Thus, the contribution of the theory is to give an understanding of how people actively generate a rule-bound world in everyday practices. This theory will help us identify values in formatting and language, identity and powers through text within society. Fairclough’s theory will help us identify language issues, specifically how politicians speak on and about the issue. Fairclough will also highlight how people and politicians speak about the issue representing a more

profound social structure related to the research question regarding what hinders the political initiatives of RMC. Additionally, Fairclough will help uncover the social structures that influence the discourse and the underlying premise that might stand in the way of new policy initiatives. More specifically, Fairclough will help us understand the social implication of how the problem is discussed. (Fairclough, 1995)

4.2 Patterson's Theory on Climate Policy Backlash

Patterson's theory is grounded in the idea that climate policies are essential to meet ambitious climate targets, but introducing such policies can trigger backlashes. Patterson's theory intends to explain why political actors do not act on specific issues, such as the policies regarding RMC. The theory aims to explain why climate policies might not be implemented because of a fear of backlash. The theory examines the effects of backlash and helps in understanding these effects (Patterson, 2023). This theory helps us understand the issues of legitimacy and fear of backlash more in-depth and how it influences their decision-making (Patterson, 2023). The theory will help us analyse the reluctance to engage in policy initiatives on RMC in Sweden. Patterson's theory, fear of backlash, explains why politicians do not engage in policy initiatives for RMC. The theory will guide us by allowing us to understand and uncover broader and more significant political issues in implementing climate policies and why policies targeting RMC might differ from other policies. The theory of backlash will help inform our analysis of a theoretical framework for why politicians themselves do not want to engage in policy initiatives. Specifically, it helps explain the research question by highlighting broader aspects of what hinders politicians from acting on RMC. (Patterson, 2023)

4.3 Gustafsson's Theory on Inefficient Policies

Anders Gustafsson's theory focuses on why politicians implement inefficient policies. Gustafsson argues that many policies implemented yearly are relatively inefficient and tend to be small in size and scope. Here Gustafsson argues that often it is the rational solution for politicians to adopt inefficient programs because of the concern about re-election chances. Politicians often cannot implement difficult reform and thus risk upsetting voters, so they choose not to address specific issues that might be sensitive for voters. According to Gustafsson, an inefficient reform does not lead voters to believe that the politician is incompetent, which a lack of action risks doing. Theorising intentional inefficiency aiming to obfuscate the difficulty of efficient reforms can therefore be relevant when looking for explanations of political failure in the analysis. Gustafsson's theory also relates to the fear of backlash, as when politicians are debating, for instance, a specific policy, whether to implement or not, they will keep the

possible responses of the public in mind. Gustafsson's idea on the argument that politicians have to do something provides insightful information on why politicians might be slow to adopt specific policy initiatives for more controversial climate issues. Thus it provides us with a theoretical explanation for certain political decisions. Theoretically, this would help answer the research question of what specific aspects and issues within the discourse might hinder political initiatives within Sweden. (Gustafsson, 2019)

5.0 Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The research compares views surrounding meat consumption and the lack of aims at reducing it through a critical discourse analysis approach. The methodology chosen will help answer the research question as it creates a picture of the views between public opinion and the political sphere. Public opinion will be seen through the portrayal in newspapers and media outlets, generally referring to newspapers, television companies, or other mass media productions that publish news and stories. At the same time, political actions will be studied through debates, transcripts, and literature reviews on state official documents and organisations. This paper focuses on Sweden's most prominent media outlets, which means those ranked the highest, best, or most visited news and media outlets. When mentioning policy initiatives, we go beyond just motions and petitions. We also look at election promises, propositions to the general public and what politicians argue for in terms of specific laws, rules and bills. Therefore, it combines both state-owned and independently-owned outlets. It will therefore view the inter-complex relations between politics and media regarding the issue of meat consumption through Carol Bacchi's approach. It helps answer the research question as it researches what aspects influence the discourse and might hinder policy initiatives. Quotes have also been used to strengthen arguments throughout the text. To keep the originality and integrity of the quotes, they have been kept in Swedish to use the source's exact words. For our translation of the quotes to English, see Appendix III.

5.2 Research Method

Bacchi's WPR, "What's the problem represented to be?", is intended to facilitate critical interrogation of public policies relevant for us when tackling the lack of policies regarding RMC in Sweden. This approach intends to diversify how a problem is represented within politics and to target this problem representation with critical scrutiny (Bacchi, 2012). WPR will help uncover the underlying themes, problems, silences and effects. The idea is that there are uncovered hidden meanings and issues with the

problem representation of the RMC within the discourse in Sweden. It assists us in challenging the view that governments respond to existing problems. The method draws attention to particular issues within the discourse of meat consumption that might hinder policy initiatives in Sweden. The important point is that certain ways of engaging with a problem and policy responses will determine which issues get lifted and which will be left out of discussions. The method will help us reflect on how the information is represented and help us identify deep-seated assumptions within the general society and politicians. Bacchi's method will also be used through the lens of Fairclough and help reflect on how language and the way the problem is presented shape society and how people think about the issue of RMC. Most importantly, Bacchi's six questions will help us identify the silence in the discourse, problematic aspects and how politicians conceptualise the problem. The effect of the issues' discursive, subjective nature will guide the paper's analysis. (Bacchi, 2007)

Bacchi's method in media texts helps produce particular effects because these media texts shape societies, individuals, and citizens' behaviours, understandings, and attitudes on the targeted topic. Thus, making them highly relevant to examine with and against particular policies (Bacchi, 2021). For other sources, such as those from non-governmental actors, experts, and agencies, WRP is still applicable as it works with and through a government perspective. This can therefore be deployed to interrogate the full range of governmental and knowledge practices (Bacchi, 2021). Bacchi's method also embraces a broader range of actors and agencies, which includes experts and professionals and their knowledge. WRP can thus be applied to an extensive range of materials produced by these agencies and the experts. (Bacchi, 2021)

5.3 Data Collection

The sources can be grouped into independent newspapers, non-profit organisations, state agencies, and the official state. Firstly, the newspapers used are Aftonbladet, Expressen and Svenska Dagbladet, three of the most prominent newspapers. Secondly, Naturskyddsföreningen is an organisation that works with nature and the climate in the political sphere, both nationally and internationally. The main purpose is to promote environmental improvement (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2023). SMMI is a lobby organisation working on the environmental effect of food and the implementation of meat taxation (SMMI, 2023). SVT is an independent national public television broadcast where the government appoints the members following proposals from political parties to guarantee the company's independence (SVT, 2023). WWF is the world's leading conservation organisation that works to protect and develop communities and wildlife (WWF, 2023a). Thirdly, the state agencies, Konsumentverket and Naturskyddsverket.

Konsumentverket aims to give consumers tips and ideas while informing them about laws and rules that apply to consumers (KO, 2023). The main task of Naturvårdsverket is to promote and coordinate Swedish environmental work, such as caring for biodiversity, reducing emissions, and contributing to a more resource-efficient society (Naturvårdsverket, 2023). Fourthly, the official state sources have been derived directly from Riksdagen.se. Thus everything related to the motion and political debates within the parliament is from there (Riksdagen, 2021). For a detailed list of the sources used, see Table 1.

Finally, the collected sources have been carefully chosen and are essential for the data analysis as they all help uncover Sweden's political and general attitudes toward meat consumption. The sources used have helped point out discrepancies between society and politicians, thus highlighting the research question of what aspects and issues within the discourse of meat consumption might hinder political initiatives. Further, the sampling process was done by searching the keywords on the selected sources, thus purposefully sampling sources only relevant to the research question. These keywords were selected as they related to our research question and would help find the relevant discourse themes. The keywords we used were, *Köttkonsumtion* (Meat consumption), *Politik köttkonsumtion* (Politics Meat consumption), *Minska köttkonsumtionen* (Reduce meat consumption), *Kött och miljö* (Meat and environment). Further, we focused on contemporary data that could be argued to hold an influence on the current discourse. In the end, that gave us 23 sources between the various categories. See the detailed appendix (table 1.) for an explicit list of the numerous data sources and the number of articles. (For a detailed list of sources used, see Appendix II)

Table 1. Data distribution of sources

Sources	Total amount of articles
All Sources combined	23
Independent newspaper	5
Aftonbladet	3
Expressen	1
Svenska Dagbladet	1
Non profit organisations	8
Naturskyddsföreningen	4
SMMI	1
SVT	2
WWF	1
State agencies	5
Konsumentverket	4
Naturvårdsverket	1
Official state	5
Riksdagen	5

5.4 Reflexivity

Our interest in the research gap arose from a personal interest. There was a personal bias and a perceived notion of an opinion. Personal biases can be reflected in two ways. First, the subjective opinion that RMC carries has positive attributes. This is not a personal bias without support, as little research opposes the statement, and the statement we make on RMC is supported by most of the academic literature and science. Secondly, since we have adopted Bacchi's methodology, we are active agents in the data collection and reflect the paper's outcome (Sampio et al., 2022., Michielsen & Van der Horst, 2022., Koenig, 2019., Paterson, 2008). The aspect of media bias is worth noting, where media and newspapers form and shape their news in a certain way. This has been combated in several ways. Firstly, we have implemented newspapers from across the political spectrum and tried to diversify our sources, hoping to mitigate some of the possible biases (Eriksson & Mossesson, 2014). Secondly, as we engage in critical discourse, we expect a certain degree of presumed biases and base our analysis on the existing biases within our sources. We believe that it is through this media bias that we can help uncover aspects that relate to Fairclough's theory and that will uncover aspects that help answer our research question. Thirdly, still, we believe the subjectivity of bias must be kept in mind when using and reading media sources for discourse analysis. (Morrissette et al., 2017)

In terms of limitations, we have found some. Firstly, the study's topic is very niche and is not as discussed in the main scenes. We do not see that as something negative, as it highlights the need for more research on this topic and the existing gap concerning our research question. Unlike more heavily discussed discourses in Sweden, we have had to broaden the scope of the methodology to have enough data for the discussion, this meaning looking not only at newspapers or one political motion but combining them and other state agencies and non-profit organisations sources to form a discourse analysis. This also becomes one of the significant strengths of the paper, as it generates a new direction for further study. The second limitation relates to our methodology. Critical discourse analysis has been criticised in two ways, for its unscientific approach and the analysis's judgemental nature (Breeze, 2011). To counteract these issues, we have relied heavily on contrasting what we identified during the data analysis stage with what has been scientifically, academically, and publicly discussed. Thus we can demonstrate and logically support our conclusions. We have also tried not to focus too much on individual political parties but instead tried to show the overall political discourse in Sweden and show similarities in the overall argument of politicians in terms of RMC. Looking at the political climate as a whole has helped keep subjective opinions out of the discussion as much as possible. (Meta Group, 2019)

Lastly, a limitation of the study is its inability to be generalised, meaning that the points made within this thesis should be used to inspire other issues but not be transferred directly. However, we hope this paper can be used as a stepping stone for more policy initiatives on meat consumption. We argue that further research can be built upon our research, both in other Western countries and within Sweden, regarding other contested climate matters. So the paper should not be directly transferred to other settings but can be an outline for other relevant domains other than the one we study. However, since every country is different and has different implications, we deem it ethically inappropriate to assume that the conclusions can be directly transferred to other settings (Sampio et al., 2022., Michielsen & Van der Horst, 2022., Koenig, 2019). Most importantly, we do not see it ethically wise to adopt the rhetoric in this paper to developing countries. That is because the overconsumption of meat is a problem primarily in developed countries, and other aspects of consideration are needed when studying the question in developing countries (United Nations, 2019., Vetter, 2021). Regarding ethical considerations, the sources used all follow copyright regulations and other Swedish laws and policies concerning the spread of information, distribution of news, and consent. We ensure that we are sensitive to source originality, that the quotation and referencing are done correctly and ensure not to proclaim information not created by ourselves (Riksdagen, 2022).

5.5 Data Analysis

The content for the analysis was inspired by Miles and Huberman's model of qualitative data management. It helped guide the stages of dealing with the data and sources between the collection and analysis. It follows three main concepts; data reduction, data display and drawing & verifying conclusions. In the first stages of data reduction, we mainly focused on editing, answering Bacchi's six questions and summarising the data in a rough draft. In the second stage, we focused on memoing and categorising it into themes, *Responsibility*, *State interference*, *Information as the solution*, *Policy efficiency and Prioritisation* and *Social impact and influence*, also removing clutter. The next stage we engaged in was conceptualising it, reducing it, and attempting to explain abstract concepts such as *little Sweden*. We attempted to maintain as much as possible of the underlying language and representation of the problem. Through these processes, we were able to find themes for our analysis. (Punch, 2005)

The six questions by Bacchi's WPR have guided the analysis and helped uncover the underlying themes, problems, silences and effects of the problem representation. Question 1, *What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy or policies?*, it helped us understand how the problem is represented in the

discourse and what focal points the politicians and civil society had. Further, Question 2, *What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the “problem”?*, helped identify assumptions, misinformation, and deep-seated presumption within the discourse and how they shaped it. Question 3, *How has this representation of the “problem” come about?*, it made us critically reflect on what has led to the emergence of these representations and how society, culture and how we talked about the problem shaped how RMC is discussed in society. Much focus has been given to Question 4, *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the “problem” be conceptualised differently?*, as it helped us identify how the question is conceptualised today and how that contributes to the representation of the problem. It also clearly showed us what gaps exist within the discourse, what silences exist and what issues and aspects had been left out. Through the help of the theoretical framework, we could also identify why these issues had been left out, had not been prioritised or why politicians might apply ineffective policy initiatives. This helped us answer Question 5, *What effects are produced by this representation of the “problem”?* We could critically reflect on the effects of the discourse in Sweden today and understand how one thing had led to another. Question 6, *How and where has this representation of the “problem” been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or can it be disrupted and replaced?*, it helped us reflect on how various actors defended and disseminated the problem representation and contrasted politicians against other societal actors. It showed us general assumptions that defended current problem representation where we could disrupt and try to replace this generally accepted knowledge by providing insight into these issues. (Bacchi, 2012)

Thus these questions have helped the analysis by allowing us to dig into the inter-complex relations between media and politics regarding the issue of meat consumption. It has facilitated a critical interrogation of the selected public policies, media news, and the relationship between state-owned and independently-owned outlets. It has allowed us to diversify how the problem has been represented within the discourse with critical scrutiny. It has allowed us to reflect critically on the problem representation and how the discourse presents and displays these problems. These six questions helped us identify the gaps and silences within the discourse and critically reflect upon them. Thus, through the data analysis with Bacchi’s six questions, we could find the answers to the research question, which allowed us to identify aspects and issues within the discourse that hinder political initiatives in Sweden.

6.0 Analysis

The thesis analysis is organised and structured as follows: Section 6.1 concerns *Responsibility*. Section 6.2 presents *Intervening and Control*, with the subchapter of 6.2.1 Involuntariness to Interfere and 6.2.2 Fear of Backlash. *Information and Misinformation* are in Section 6.3, where we also look at 6.3.1 Focus on Swedish Meat for the Environment, 6.3.2 Misplaced Prioritisation and 6.3.3 Blame Game. in Section 6.4 *Social and behavioural aspects* can be found, with 6.4.1 The Social Influence and 6.4.2 Means of Control and the Implementation of Hard and Soft Tools. Thus the analysis wishes to benefit society and the gaps in academia by identifying obstacles to RMC. Table 2. contains the summarised outcomes from the analysis.

Table 2. The Outcome of the Analysis

	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>State Interference</i>	<i>Information as the solution</i>	<i>Policy efficiency and prioritisation</i>	<i>Social impact and influence</i>
Our main argument:	People detach from the problem and instead place the responsibility on others.	There is a strong involuntariness among politicians to tell citizens how they should act.	Lack of information is not the reason for citizens' unsustainable consumption behaviour.	Politicians prioritise inefficient policies.	Societal aspects of people's meat consumption should have a greater focus, and policy initiatives should also focus on changing behaviours.
The recurring arguments within the sources	<i>Sweden's meat consumption should not be the focus. Other countries or aspects should.</i>	<i>Not wanting to intervene, interfere, rule over or decide what consumers can or should eat.</i>	<i>If we helped consumers understand and informed them, they would behave rationally and reduce their meat consumption.</i>	<i>Information, expanding Swedish livestock production and prioritising external actors should be the primary concern.</i>	<i>Meat consumption carries a heavy historical, cultural and societal value.</i>
Counterargument	In regards to consumption, Sweden emits way more than the average country.	There is a growing demand for politicians to act on climate initiatives, and instead of restricting, one could focus on promotion and nudging.	Information has shown to be an easy and inefficient policy initiative, and it should not be the leading and prioritised approach.	Politicians often promote insufficient and less effective policies instead of prioritising issues such as reducing meat consumption.	Sweden is very trend sensitive, which makes people subjective to move away from deep-seated cultural norms.
The problematic aspect of how the issue is presented	Concepts such as "little Sweden" remove responsibility and diminish Sweden's consumption issues.	Politicians do interference every day in other aspects of social life, and climate experts argue that national interference is necessary for reaching climate goals.	Political actors try to diminish the legitimacy by using language, formatting and rhetoric to belittle the arguments and focus on inefficient policy reductions.	The idea that increasing the information will lead to better consumer choices and that the way forward is to improve Swedish meat production does not reflect reality.	Meat consumption is socially categorised into social norms, perceptions and attitudes, such as masculinity and femininity and is presented in a way that helps build stereotypes and stigmatisation.

6.1 Responsibility

During the analysis of Bacchi's *question five*, it became clear that responsibility was an issue within the discourse. Politicians closed off the debate, put boundaries to the discussion, alienated and helped stigmatise the issue of RMC. A contingent theme throughout the analysis. The effects of how it is defined in society also point to what the silences are. It relates to the research question as it is an issue that hinders policy initiatives. The issue of responsibility relates to who is responsible for solving the issues. In the case of meat consumption, no person, party or else has taken on the responsibility to guide

the topic forward. The effects of this silence are its influence on the perception and attitude of Swedish consumers as well as how politicians view the question of meat consumption and their role in the issue.

One conceptual underpinning stood out when examining the narrative within Sweden's discourse on RMC, the idea of *little Sweden*. The idea of *little Sweden* is that Sweden is a small country with little influence on the broader issue of climate change. With this narrative, the general Swedish citizen is excluded from the problems of meat consumption (Aftonbladet, 2019). In many instances, Jimmie Åkersson, Sverigedemokraternas party leader, refers to Sweden as *little Sweden* and diminishes its role in a bigger global scheme. Socialdemokraterna questions why Sweden, with a little percentage of the bigger emissions, should work towards reduction when China continues to increase their emissions (Odelfors, 2022). This representation of the problem is reflected in statements such as:

“Vi ska vara ett föregångsland... fast det utsläppen som vi har i Sverige inte påverkar klimatet. Inte ens på marginalen” - Jimmie Åkesson (Expressen, 2022)

In an article by Naturskyddsföreningen (2021a), they answer commonly asked questions and misinformation about vegetarian food, meat consumption and the environment. Where they try to debunk beliefs and social perceptions within society on meat consumption and its climate effects, one of the perceptions was:

“Men vad spelar det för roll vad vi äter i lilla Sverige, det egentliga problemet borde väl vara den växande medelklassen i Kina?” (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2021a)

It can be stated that this representation of the problem leads to a discrepancy between themselves, the problem and the solutions (Aftonbladet, 2019). Hanna Odelfors from Aftonbladet (2022), means that the rhetoric of it does not matter what *little Sweden* does, reflects the view of the politicians and is a common theme in Swedish political discussions about emissions. Indicating that it is not their responsibility to solve this issue as it goes beyond their capability. Although Sweden is a top emitter relative to its size, they are also on the higher end of the scale regarding emissions and climate effects overall. Relating to Bacchi's *question five*, the idea that it is not Sweden's responsibility thus goes against the empirical evidence presented, because if every human were to live as people in *little Sweden*, 4,2 globes would be required to sustain the lifestyle. (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2021b)

Also related to Bacchi's *question five*, the representation of the problem is that Sweden can not do anything to solve the issue, as priority has not been put on climate change. It has instead been put on other topics, such as crime rates, higher mortgages, and declining health care. Without a consensus on climate change as a common focus for all, it is hard to implement common changes through the government (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2022a & 2022b). By portraying the problem as an external issue versus an internal one, they derive the discussion from being about a collective responsibility and instead put it elsewhere (SMMI, 2022). Additionally, with the politicians brushing off their responsibility through the idea of *little Sweden*, it reflects on the citizens and becomes the idea of *little me*. Why does it matter what *little me* does? The idea of *little me* being reflected through the politicians' *little Sweden* affects the citizens' attitudes and willingness to act and how they view meat consumption, as politicians belittle the problem and their ability to act and change the climate course. (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2021a & 2021b)

6.2 Intervening and Control

6.2.1 Involuntariness to Interfere

Relating to Bacchi's *question one*, politicians' unwillingness to interfere is a clear issue within the discourse of RMC, which hinder policy initiatives. The prominent rhetoric here is that politicians want to exercise citizens' right to free will by not intervening in family and private life or consumer behaviour. Sven Erik Bacht, the former Swedish minister of rural affairs, said:

“Jag vill inte politiskt styra vad som ska finnas på frukostbordet, lunchbordet eller middagsbordet. Där tror jag nog att politiken ska hålla sig borta från det svenska köket på det sättet...” - Sven Erik Bacht (Öhman, 2016)

This is also underlined by how politicians feel about intervening in private life. With the ideological idea of not demanding, steering or blaming consumers for changing their behaviour. This is further highlighted by quotes such as:

“Det värsta folk kan tänka sig är politiker som kommer med pekpinne” - Jens Holm (SvenskPolitik1, 2013)

“Den globala uppvärmningen kommer inte att förhindras genom att vi skuldbelägger enskilda individers val att äta kött...” - Louise Meyer (SVT Nyheter, 2019)

Bacchi's *question two* highlights a strong belief that politicians represent the deep-seated values of their target audience, that they represent their ideas, beliefs, wants and needs. That is one of the reasons why the issue of not wanting to impose things on the individual has occurred. (SVT Nyheter, 2019)

Louise Meyer, the climate political spokesperson for Moderaterna, argues that the state should not intervene in citizens' consumption unless it regards health. The counterargument to these ideas is that environmental issues are already an issue of health in many countries and will affect Sweden later on (SVT Nyheter, 2019). The argument that politicians do not want to intervene does not correspond with their actions as multiple articles discuss how politicians, now more than ever, micromanage and intervene on everything from municipality work, what culture to display, health, taxes and subsidies to electrical cars steering consumers into what type of car to drive. (Lindgren & Sundström., 2022, Dagens Samhälle, 2023., Broman, 2022)

Patterson's idea of legitimacy can be related to the aspects of interference as there is some degree of legitimacy concerns from politicians to exercise their authority over citizens (Patterson, 2023., SVT Nyheter, 2019). Theoretically, the idea is that politicians do not want to implement these policies because of the fear of negative consequences (Patterson, 2023). Further, politicians who do not act on specific issues due to fear of backlash provide a profound explanation of why politicians fear exercising their legitimacy to rule and implement policy initiatives on controversial questions (Patterson, 2023). In terms of Fairclough's theory, it could be explained that not to make it an issue of power and authority with politicians ruling over citizens, the issue of RMC has to be wrapped into aspects of socially accepted knowledge, such as health concerns (Fairclough, 1995., SVT Nyheter, 2019). To exercise power their legitimacy would have to come from a deeper societal structure, and without politicians feeling supported by the public on these issues, they fear backlash (Patterson, 2023., Fairclough 1995., SVT Nyheter, 2019). One interesting aspect is that politicians are willing to interfere in some aspects of private life but not others, highlighting the conceptual controversy of RMC. Jens Holm points out that the emissions from cars and meat are practically the same at around 10 million tons. Most parties agree on the need to act on the issues of car emissions and find solutions to the problem regarding emissions. Taxes and subsidies have been implemented to try and steer consumers towards certain types of cars. However, no means of control exist regarding RMC. (Sveriges Riksdag, 2022c)

“Trots att animaliekonsumtionen har stor påverkan på klimatet, miljön, djur och folkhälsa är det sällan frågan debatteras politiskt och det finns inga politiska beslut med syfte att minska konsumtionen i en mer hållbar riktning” - Jens Holm (Sveriges Riksdag, 2022c)

“Regeringen avser därför inte att anta någon handlingsplan minska köttkonsumtion eller reglera konsumenternas val av enskilda livsmedel” - Eskil Erlandsson (Sveriges riksdag, 2022c)

According to WWF (2023b), there is a growing wish and demand from Swedish citizens to act on climate issues, as there is a wish for more policy initiatives. WWF believes politicians do not act on behalf of their voters as there is a lack of political initiatives. Showing a discrepancy between what the citizens want and what the politicians believe citizens want. People actually want to be environmentally friendly and try to reduce meat consumption. WWF indicates that consumers want politicians to make it simpler and cheaper to choose sustainable food. Although WWF argues that vegetarian food is the best option for both the environment and your wallet, they call out politicians to help guide this transition. They argue that politicians must make it easier to choose right and help guide consumers and producers to more sustainable options (WWF, 2023b). Patterson's theoretical argument questions if politicians understand what citizens might accept and not accept in terms of policy initiatives for the climate. (Patterson, 2023)

“Klimatbarometern visar tydligt att det svenska folket vill se betydligt starkare insatser för planeten, tvärt emot den nedmontering vi just nu ser av den svenska miljö- och klimatpolitiken” - Gustaf Lind. (WWF, 2023b)

Naturskyddsföreningen (2021) argues that we all have a responsibility. Since politicians have been unusually slow to reduce meat consumption, it is positive that citizens themselves have engaged in green vegetarian trends. The cure towards cowardly politicians is to have brave citizens show the way (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2021a). Instrumental changes in consumption and production are needed to reach the environmental- and climate goals (SMMI, 2022). People are willing to reduce their meat consumption, and there has been an increase in the number of people who believe that the state should intervene and implement necessary changes. Citizens are willing to contribute to more environmentally friendly and sustainable choices if others do it as well, the mindset of *I will if you will*. (Naturvårdsverket, 2011)

6.2.2 Fear of Backlash

Related to Bacchi's first question, fear of backlash has been a prominent aspect of this analysis. Theoretically, it helps explain why politicians act the way they do. It also relates to the research question, as it hinders politicians from implementing new policy initiatives (Patterson, 2023). John Granlund (2022) argues that politicians sometimes help enhance the dominant frames of climate change when they jump ships to accommodate their voters. He argues that politicians attempt to simply please the majority in hopes of better results during the election (Granlund, 2022). Connected with Bacchi's *question four*, politicians need to distance themselves from these issues to gain popularity from certain societal groups. This highlights the controversy of policy initiatives to reduce meat consumption and why politicians hesitate to have it as a focal point in their climate action plan. They perceive that certain groups within the society have deep-seated cultural values that make the political parties afraid to push specific political arguments, such as RMC. (Granlund, 2022)

Promoting inefficient policies over effective ones can be seen when Erik Erlandsson, Swedish minister of rural affairs, argues that food waste is the prime issue and should be prioritised before RMC. Although it is an issue that needs attention, it is only 2 million tons of emission compared to the 9 million from meat consumption. He argues that the issue should be the prime focus of lowering climate footprints in Sweden (Gustafsson, 2019., Koenig, 2003). This argument is also seen from Miljöpartiet:

“Miljöpartiet driver omfattande politik för att minska klimat- och miljöpåverkan från hela livsmedelssystemet. Att minska matsvinnet är en av de mest effektiva klimatåtgärderna när det handlar om mat. Miljöpartiet vill skärpa det nationella målet för minskat matsvinn, med särskilt fokus på det animaliska matsvinnet.” - Felicia Olsson (SMMI, 2022)

Jarelin and Schütt (2019) argue that less waste is not enough. There is a need to change food patterns through policies as it becomes vital to guide people towards better choices (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). This also points to Rosencrantz's argument that politicians promote inefficient politics:

“Regeringen har ägnat sig åt små frågor men inte tagit tag i det stora systemfrågor; symbolpolitik” framför resultat och effekt...” - Jessica Rosencrantz (Sveriges Riksdag, 2022b)

6.3 Information and Misinformation

6.3.1 Focus on Swedish Meat for the Environment

Related to *question one* in WPR, the representation of the problem points to a specific way that politicians have shaped the way we look at the problem of meat consumption. Through this problem representation, politicians shape the underlying premise for why we do not have policies on RMC in Sweden. As Fairclough mentions, politicians help shape the socially accepted knowledge and, thus the social thoughts on the problem. How they speak on the issue shapes the ideas and beliefs and creates meaning on how to view the issue of RMC (Fairclough, 1995). Many politicians argue that the way forward is to focus on Swedish-produced meat. Where politicians believe Swedish meat promotes biological diversity and is more environmentally friendly than imported meat. (SMMI, 2022)

Connected to WPR *question five*, it is a common belief that Swedish meat consumption and production are positive for biological diversity. However, evidence instead argues that Sweden's meat consumption and production negatively impact biological diversity. Aftonbladet (2019) argues that only a few Swedish livestock productions are structured to optimise biological diversity. For most productions in Sweden, promoting biological diversity is not a norm (Aftonbladet, 2019). Statistics also show that although food production is necessary, they are among the biggest emitters. (KO, 2020)

Many politicians argue that meat production is necessary and positive for biological diversity. Contrary to that argument, plenty of evidence suggests that Sweden's meat consumption and production harm biological diversity. Naturskyddsföreningen (2015) argues that for the sake of the environment, politicians should focus on improving vegetarian options whilst reducing livestock production, but not completely get rid of the livestock production. Therefore there should also be a focus on improving the production to achieve a production that promotes biological diversity (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2015). The argument that increasing vegetarian food harms Swedish agriculture is not entirely correct. Naturskyddsföreningen (2015) argues that vegetarian food would help foster biological diversity and help against over soiling the earth. By RMC, they argue that not only does one gain health benefits, but the ecosystem will also benefit. The biological diversity would go up and not down if we were to introduce more vegetarian options. (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2015)

Secondly, on the topic of nationally produced meat, many politicians promote a switch to locally, ecological and nationally produced meat. They argue that Swedish meat, agricultural and livestock production is the way forward. There seems to be political agreement that meat should be shifted from imported to locally produced when possible. (SVT Nyheter, 2019)

“Det svenska jordbruket är troligtvis det mest ambitiösa i världen när det gäller att ta ansvar för miljö, djurskydd, hälsa och kvalitet.” - Magnus Oscarsson (Sveriges riksdag, 2020)

“Vi inte når fram om hur stor skillnad det är mellan kött från olika delar av världen och svenskt kött, som hela tiden blir allt mer hållbart för klimatet” - Hanna Westeren (SVT Nyheter, 2019)

This quote also highlights that there seems to be a sense of pride among politicians. They believe that a shift towards Sweden's more environmentally friendly production will be the most environmentally friendly approach to the issue, where some form of argument can be found in most of the political parties (SMMI, 2022). For instance, Tove Fridman (Kristendemokraterna) says they want to increase the amount of Swedish-produced food and increase total self-sufficiency in food, leading to environmental and climate benefits. Continuing, Rikard Nordin (Centerpartiet) wants to increase domestic food production, which would decrease emissions from the global transportation of food. Centerpartiet believes consumers should decide whether to eat meat or plant-based products (SMMI, 2022). Joel Andreasson (Socialdemokraterna) discusses the opportunities for municipalities to act more environmentally friendly. They also work long-term to strengthen the Swedish food chain in line with the food strategy. Finally, Patrik Locke (Moderaterna) argues that, already today, Swedish food production takes place with low environmental and climate impact. Although every second meal of food in Sweden is imported, reducing the environmental impact of food consumption, the proportion of Swedish-produced food on the plate should increase. (SMMI, 2022)

There are two issues with the representation of the problem of nationally produced meat. The first aspect is that meat and sustainability in Swedish are often represented as one product group where everything is very alike. This is motivated by some general idea that all Swedish meat lives up to the environmental standards presented (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). The second aspect is that although politicians seem to agree on more locally produced food, little scientific evidence proves it is the most efficient way

forward (SVT Nyheter, 2019). The political parties assume that some of the switches proposed will have a more significant change than they do. If you only look at the environmental aspect, switching to nationally produced meat does not benefit the environment much. The Swedish livestock production over foreign ones has only measured marginal climate emission reductions, if any, compared to choosing vegetables. Thus the political parties take for granted that their climate initiatives will be more beneficial and effective than they are. (SMMI, 2022)

As highlighted by *question six* in the WPR approach, there is another significant issue, imported meat (Aftonbladet, 2019). The critical aspect here is also that when looking at the meat consumed by Swedish citizens, most of the meat consumed is imported. Almost half of the meat eaten in Sweden is imported, and even animal fodder is often imported and most often from Brazil, which carries many environmental concerns. Radically reducing today's meat consumption to achieve sustainability is something vegan and vegetarian food options can help with (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2021a). Fairclough would argue that politicians' knowledge presentations shape how society views the issue (Fairclough, 1995). Through the language and way of talking about the problem, they provide knowledge that might not be aligned with the scientific evidence. However, due to politicians' perceived knowledge, they help create social meaning (Fairclough, 1995., Patterson, 2023). The way politicians speak about the problem also helps shape a more profound representation of the problem, which then influences the discourse and the underlying premise of what hinders the policy initiatives on RMC. Following Bacchi's methodology through the lens of Fairclough, it can be highlighted that the politician influences the social structures and, thus, how the problem is represented. (Fairclough, 1995., Bacchi, 2007)

6.3.2 Misplaced Prioritisation

An issue found repeatedly in the discourse of RMC is the lack of prioritisation or misplaced climate prioritisation among politicians. Which we argue is a vital aspect that has hindered policy initiatives on RMC. The argument of politicians is quite simple. It is through the information that the consumer can make sustainable choices (Sveriges riksdag, 2022c). Hanna Western, a spokesperson for Socialdemokraterna, highlighted the idea. When receiving a question that says that there is already plenty of information, why do we need more ? (SVT Nyheter, 2019). Western answers:

“Uppenbarligen gör det ju det, eftersom vi inte når fram om hur stor skillnad det är mellan kött från olika delar av världen och svenskt kött, som hela tiden blir allt mer hållbart för klimatet”
(SVT Nyheter, 2019)

Among many politicians, there is a steadfast belief that the approach to evoke change within consumer behaviours, especially on the topic of RMC, is information. Some of the parties believe that informing the individual on the impact of meat will lead to consumers shifting away from meat and that they will keep this new knowledge in mind when shopping. Information has been the main focus of many initiatives and is described as the way forward (SVT Nyheter, 2019). Uncovered through *questions four and six* in Bacchi's method, information is an easy and quick approach but also very ineffective (KO, 2020). Information is not the key limitation between consumers' choice of meat versus more sustainable options and it is relatively ineffective when changing behaviour. However, it is crucial to inform citizens to increase knowledge on how environmentally draining the food they eat is and the health and environmental impact of products. (Difs, 2020., Ko, 2020)

WPR approach *question three* shows that it can be stated that politicians have ineffective priorities, such as information and food waste (Drevinger, 2016). This lack of prioritisation is also related to the theoretical arguments of Patterson and Gustafsson, a way to avoid backlash, whilst adopting and implementing ineffective policies (Patterson, 2023., Gustafsson, 2019). The problem here is the issue of politicians actively going against factual science and neglecting to see the issue of meat consumption (Drevinger, 2016). As pointed out earlier in the Rosencrantz quote in section 6.2 the government has dealt with minor issues rather than focusing on results and effect, she criticised their lack of leadership and governance (Sveriges Riksdag, 2022a). As mentioned in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2, ineffective approaches have been adopted (Sveriges Riksdag, 2022c., Hallå Konsument, 2022). Additionally, Erlandsson has also argued that they have focused on giving international support, focusing on developing countries to solve some of these consumption issues. Although this paper has shown from the start that the focus on consumption should be on developed Western countries, as we are the root of the problem and the biggest emitters. (Sveriges Riksdag, 2022c)

As shown prior, concerning *question two* from the WPR, politicians propose change without changing much (SMMI, 2022). Gustafsson's theory would explain that this is because it is less of a risk. As mentioned in section 4.3, politicians apply inefficient policies to avoid facing unpopularity from the more effective ones. Intentional inefficiency aiming to obfuscate the difficulty of efficient reforms can therefore be relevant when looking for explanations for political failure (Gustafsson, 2019). Thus, this questions the politicians' legitimacy and authority to act on the needed policies to achieve Sweden's climate goals. (Patterson, 2023)

Regarding the argument that information is the way forward, the scientific aspect of the rational brain is forgotten. Science shows that consumers are not rational when deciding what to eat. The brain usually makes decisions with the least energy necessary, which means humans usually act on routines. Instead, routines pick what to eat, disregarding the knowledge or information on climate change. When new meat supplements are introduced, people will not go the extra mile and gather knowledge. Instead, people will likely fall into old habits and choose the easiest option. (Naturvårdsverket, 2011)

6.3.3 Blame Game

In the analysis of Bacchi's question, when looking at how the problem has come about, it became quite clear that there was a contingent practice and process between the general society and politicians regarding what we call the blame game. The idea of whom to blame is an issue within the discourse that highlights who should initiate the changes of RMC. Blaming others instead of acting yourself is a theme throughout the analysis (Naturskyddsforeningen, 2021a & 2021b). Politicians will not act on RMC but would rather put the responsibility elsewhere such as on the shoulders of the consumer, allowing them to decide whether to reduce meat consumption themselves (SVT Nyheter, 2019). Politicians remove themselves from the equation, no difficult decisions need to be made, and they do not have to risk being unpopular among the public if they do not act, as when acting can result in backlash (Patterson, 2023., Gustafsson, 2019).

There is no unity on whether this issue is to be or even can be solved without the involvement of politicians (SVT Nyheter, 2019). Part of the issue is the discrepancy between what the citizens want and what the politicians believe that the citizens want, making them act on what they believe (WWF, 2023b). From the perspective of Fairclough, it makes one question the linguistic effect of how politicians talk about the issue and how they remove themselves from the solution as they shape the social interpretation and understanding of the problem. They also create deeper social structures of who is responsible for solving RMC. The way politicians talk about the issue, such as *little Sweden*, indirectly paints the problem in a certain way. As mentioned earlier, this way of representing the problem reflects the citizen's perceptions and attitudes. Questioning themselves and their responsibility through the ideas of *little me*, what can I do, and why is it relevant for me to act (Fairclough, 1995). Related to Bacchi's *question five*, where the mindset of not my responsibility, becomes part of the problem. If everybody instead thought about what they could do or how they could make a change. This mindset, among other things, creates this representation of the problem. (Naturskyddsforeningen, 2021a & 2021b)

6.4 Social and Behavioural Aspect

6.4.1 The Social Influence

We have identified the social aspect as a gap and an issue that needs to be examined, in order to answer the research question. Fairclough argues that discourse is essential to social practice, identity and social relations. They help shed light on different social structures and power relations that shape social practices and relations. Uncovering these social structures that relate to the underlying issues and shape the socially accepted knowledge becomes crucial (Fairclough, 1995). By changing the attitude of individuals, one will be able to change the behaviour of individuals when purchasing meat (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). Further, Sweden is specifically trend sensitive and often adopts new diets and health trends (Carlsson-Kanyama & Lindén, 2001., Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). Thus, the vegan and vegetarian trends that have become more popular in the last few years have shifted social attitudes and attention and boosted vegetarian choices. Social behaviour is influenced by social trends, convenience and exposure to vegan options (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). Also, the idea of personal responsibility for the climate consequences has been shown to far outweigh knowledge and information (Difs, 2020). It is essential to realise that various social structures control food consumption. Consuming meat has been highly valued historically and culturally. It is related to historical elements, perceptions of wealth and rank and contemporary means of self-expression through meat choices. It links to societal ideals of masculinity and manhood. The picture of men grilling meat at the barbecues or the femininity related to eating less meat.

Further, norms and trends also affect the individual in social settings and significantly affect what the consumer chooses to eat (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). The deep-seated cultural values that can also be referred to as social norms influence consumption behaviours extensively and thus influence people's choices. Having better possibilities to choose sustainably, people will make better decisions, which encourages sustainable behaviour and social norms (Difs, 2020). The cultural influence is that politicians fear to push specific arguments as they seem to think that some groups in the society have deep-seated cultural values that would object to these RMC initiatives (Granlund, 2022). Further, there is a need for tools and controls for policy interventions as it becomes important to guide people towards better choices. Perceptions, attitudes and trends, and social settings affect the deep-seated values, these aspects need to help and not hinder consumers' opportunity to make sustainable food choices concerning meat (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). Thus one key argument is that it is more efficient for decision-makers and politicians to make practical conditions for sustainable behaviour than to try and influence social norms. (Difs, 2020)

6.4.2 Means of Control and the Implementation of Hard and Soft Tools

There are two parts of the means of control, hard and soft tools. Firstly, many argue that hard tools such as taxation and subsidies will substantially impact RMC (KO, 2020., Naturvårdsverket, 2011). Jarelin and Schütt (2019) argues that several actors, both political parties and civil society organisations, must take part by putting forward proposals of taxation to reflect their adverse effects (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). These hard tools that focus on policies regarding taxation and subsidies have good potential to reduce the consumption of red meat and other animals. These economic instruments hold great potential to influence citizens' behaviour as they are practical and cost-effectively. However, they must gain public acceptance (KO, 2020). Nevertheless, as established earlier by WWF (2023), many Swedish citizens are willing to change their behaviour, pay more for sustainable food and want politicians to intervene (WWF, 2023b). KO's (2020) investigation showed that the public would accept hard tools if they could clearly and easily show their purpose and were based on solid science. They also argue that it is easier to motivate taxation on meat for environmental reasons and subsidies on fruit, greens and legumes for health reasons than vice versa (KO, 2020). However, although more and more people have started to see economic means of control as good, it is still quite a controversial question for politicians. (Naturvårdsverket, 2011)

Additionally, going back to Patterson's theory, it relates to disagreements on the policy initiated and broader questions of legitimacy and the state's right to introduce such action (Patterson, 2023). Soft tools can avoid controversy and fear of backlash while initiating climate-friendly approaches (Patterson, 2023., Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). Thus soft tools are a way not to restrict but promote RMC (Jarelin & Schütt, 2019). Nudging has gained much attention in academia and the media. It relates to decision-makers altering people's behaviour more softly, where nudging encourages certain behaviour by using various tools. Nudging is accomplished without imposing limitations and bans. Nudging has grown particularly popular in the field of environmental policy. Compared to stricter policy instruments like taxes and regulations, nudging tools can frequently be implemented without incurring significant costs. The consumer's options are not restricted by nudging (KO, 2020). WWF (2023) argues that although aspects such as nudging and softer tools have been proven easy to adopt and risk not being as efficient as hard tools, they should be at least implemented as a way for politicians to do something. The positive aspect of soft tools is that they are not as controversial and do not risk diminishing 'free will', a big concern among politicians. However, they hold potential for consumer change whilst not jeopardising controversy as much as harder tools. (WWF, 2023b., KO, 2020)

7.0 Conclusion

Politicians have stalled the policy initiatives to reduce meat consumption in Sweden. The discourse of RMC in Swedish is imperative for why new policies are held up. The representation of the problem in Sweden carries several problematic aspects. We want to point to three specific issues and aspects within the discourse of reducing meat consumption that hinders political initiatives within Sweden.

Firstly, the fact that reducing meat consumption has not been prioritised in the political sphere is of great concern. The way the discourse has been among politicians has led to the prioritisation of less controversial and ineffective solutions, approaches and policies to the issue of RMC. Politicians have been part of the current representation of the problem and societal understanding by portraying the problem as an external issue instead of an internal collective one. By focusing on issues elsewhere, they have re-directed the issue instead of making it a collective responsibility within Sweden. Simply put, politicians have not prioritised the topic of RMC. This is despite scientists and academia having clearly stated that it should be a high priority for politicians to reach the climate goals that Sweden has set.

Secondly, it became clear after Bacchi's analysis that responsibility is a significant aspect of the discourse. The effects of how politicians closed off or alienated and stigmatised the issue of RMC is a contingent theme. The issue of responsibility points to a specific aspect of the discourse that hinders policy initiatives within the discourse of RMC in Sweden. Politicians are unwilling to interfere and want to stay away from consumer behaviour based on the rhetoric of exercising citizens' right to free will. However, politicians intervene in citizens' consumer behaviour in other aspects, such as what cars to drive. There is also much evidence that the Swedish population wants politicians to intervene. Something we argue points to the discrepancy between what politicians believe citizens want and the growing demand for climate actions between citizens, politicians and the news and media outlets. This also related to the issue of blaming others, where several actors blamed each other instead of acknowledging their role in the way the problem has been and continues to be shaped in the discourse.

Lastly, we argue that the social aspect is not given enough attention as it helps shape the problem's representation and holds potential to be part of the solutions to the problem. This approach can be applied without creating fear of backlash among politicians or interfering too much with private life. Going forward, politicians should look into these social and behavioural aspects. Nudging would be beneficial to implement as it is proven easy to adopt and could be a way forward. Thus we propose implementing these while politicians find a way not to belittle the issue of RMC, figure out an efficient

way to take the lead and deal with the climate consequences of high meat consumption. To stop shifting the responsibility or letting others face the consequences and thus stop letting developing countries bear the burden of self-made issues.

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9.0 Appendix

9.1 Appendix I

Figure 1.0

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9.2 Appendix II

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9.3 Appendix III

Original Quote:

“Trots att animaliekonsumtionen har stor påverkan på klimatet, miljön, djur och folkhälsa är det sällan frågan debatteras politiskt och det finns inga politiska beslut med syfte att minska konsumtionen i en mer hållbar riktning”

Translated Quote:

“Despite the fact that animal consumption has a major impact on the climate, the environment, animals and public health, the issue is rarely debated politically and there are no political initiatives aiming at reducing consumption, towards a more sustainable direction”

Original Quote:

“Vi ska vara ett föregångsland... fast det utsläppen som vi har i Sverige inte påverkar klimatet. Inte ens på marginalen.”

Translated Quote:

“We are to be a leading country... although the emissions we have in Sweden do not affect the climate. Not even on the margin.”

Original Quote:

“Men vad spelar det för roll vad vi äter i lilla Sverige, det egentliga problemet borde väl vara den växande medelklassen i Kina?”

Translated Quote:

“What does it matter what we eat in little Sweden, the real problem should be the growing middle class in China?”

Original Quote:

“Jag vill inte politiskt styra vad som ska finnas på frukostbordet, lunchbordet eller middagsbordet. Där tror jag nog att politiken ska hålla sig borta från det svenska köket på det sättet...”

Translated Quote:

"I don't want to politically control what should be on the breakfast table, the lunch table or the dinner table. There, I think that politics should stay away from Swedish cuisine in that way..."

Original Quote:

“Det värsta folk kan tänka sig är politiker som kommer med pekpinne”

Translated Quote:

"The worst thing people can imagine is a politician who comes with a pointer"

Original Quote:

“Den globala uppvärmningen kommer inte att förhindras genom att vi skuldbelägger enskilda individers val att äta kött...”

Translated Quote:

"Global warming will not be prevented by blaming individuals for their choice to eat meat..."

Original Quote:

“Regeringen avser därför inte att anta någon handlingsplan minska köttkonsumtion eller reglera konsumenternas val av enskilda livsmedel”

Translated Quote:

"The government therefore does not intend to adopt any action plan to reduce meat consumption or regulate consumers' choice of individual foods"

Original Quote:

“Trots att animaliekonsumtionen har stor påverkan på klimatet, miljön, djur och folkhälsa är det sällan frågan debatteras politiskt och det finns inga politiska beslut med syfte att minska konsumtionen i en mer hållbar riktning”

Translated Quote:

"Despite the fact that animal consumption has a major impact on the climate, the environment, animals and public health, the issue is rarely debated politically and there are no political decisions with the aim of reducing consumption in a more sustainable direction"

Original Quote:

Klimatbarometern visar tydligt att det svenska folket vill se betydligt starkare insatser för planeten, tvärt emot den nedmontering vi just nu ser av den svenska miljö- och klimatpolitiken”

Translated Quote:

The climate barometer clearly shows that the Swedish people want to see significantly stronger efforts for the planet, quite the opposite the dismantling we are currently seeing of Swedish environmental and climate policy"

Original Quote:

“Fyra av tio (38 procent) uppger att de är beredda att betala mer ur egen ficka för mer hållbar mat... en femtedel (19 procent) att de handlar mindre kött. 1 av 3 vill att politiska styrmedel ska sänka priset på hållbar mat.”

Translated Quote:

"Four out of ten (38 percent) state that they are prepared to pay more out of pocket for more sustainable food... one fifth (19 percent) that they buy less meat. 1 in 3 want political instruments to lower the price of sustainable food."

Original Quote:

“Miljöpartiet driver omfattande politik för att minska klimat- och miljöpåverkan från hela livsmedelssystemet. Att minska matsvinnet är en av de mest effektiva klimatåtgärderna när det handlar om mat. Miljöpartiet vill skärpa det nationella målet för minskat matsvinn, med särskilt fokus på det animaliska matsvinnet.”

Translated Quote:

"Miljöpartiet pursues comprehensive policies to reduce climate and environmental impact from the entire food system. Reducing food waste is one of the most effective climate measures when it comes to food. Miljöpartiet wants to sharpen the national target for reducing food waste, with a particular focus on food waste from animals"

Original Quote:

"Regeringen har ägnat sig åt små frågor men inte tagit tag i det stora systemfrågor, symbolpolitik framför resultat och effekt..."

Translated Quote:

"The government has devoted itself to small issues but has not tackled the big systemic issues, symbolic politics" rather than results and effect..."

Original Quote:

"Det svenska jordbruket är troligtvis det mest ambitiösa i världen när det gäller att ta ansvar för miljö, djurskydd, hälsa och kvalitet."

Translated Quote:

"Swedish agriculture is probably the most ambitious in the world when it comes to taking responsibility for the environment, animal welfare, health and quality."

Original Quote:

"Vi inte når fram om hur stor skillnad det är mellan kött från olika delar av världen och svenskt kött, som hela tiden blir allt mer hållbart för klimatet"

Translated Quote:

"We don't realise how big a difference there is between meat from different parts of the world and Swedish meat, which is constantly becoming more and more sustainable for the climate"

Original Quote:

"Uppenbarligen gör det ju det, eftersom vi inte når fram om hur stor skillnad det är mellan kött från olika delar av världen och svenskt kött, som hela tiden blir allt mer hållbart för klimatet"

Translated Quote:

"Obviously it does, since we don't realise how big a difference there is between meat from different parts of the world and Swedish meat, which is constantly becoming more and more sustainable for the climate"

Original Quote:

"Regeringen avser därför inte att anta någon handlingsplan minska köttkonsumtion eller reglera konsumenternas val av enskilda livsmedel"

Translated Quote:

"The government therefore does not intend to adopt any action plan to reduce meat consumption or regulate consumers' choice of individual foods"